



ST. ANDREW'S JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Our Vision

St Andrew's Village - Home of Servant Leaders who Bring Life to the Nations

28 February 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,



1. Introduction

I would like to share the above photograph with you. This was taken during our Lunar New Year Celebration where all of our children and staff came together on a joyous occasion to wish everyone a Blessed Lunar New Year!

The first two months of my journey in SAJS has been a great one. It is very exciting for me to meet with many of you over the 13 sessions of the Meet the Parents (MTP) this year. I also enjoyed thoroughly the celebration of the Lunar New Year which would not have been possible without the leadership of our Mother Tongue Department and the support of our school staff, chaplaincy team and our most supportive parent volunteers in organising several activities for our children to learn more about the Chinese culture as we celebrated this festival.

2. Strategic Thrust 2: Developing Exemplary Character, Growing Community Builders

A famous quote by Martin Luther King, "Intelligence plus character – that is the true goal of education." In SAJS, we seek to grow the character of our saints by inculcating the TRUE and WISE values. In February, we expound on the value of **RESILIENCE** and we hope that our children will grow to be mature and complete through their perseverance.

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. – James 1:4 (NIV)

As the school song plays, "Foes in plenty we shall meet, hearts courageous scorn defeat; so we press with eager feet, up and on!" As adults, we know that life will never be always smooth sailing, hence we believe it is of utmost importance that we develop our boys to be resilient at a young age. During our daily morning devotions in February, the chaplaincy team, my vice-principals, teachers and I took turns to share real-life stories of resilient people to inspire our boys to persevere in the face of challenges.

I hope that our saints will develop the courage, optimism, adaptability and resourcefulness to overcome challenges, and in the midst of it all, seize these opportunities for growth. I have learnt from my senior school counsellor, Mr Dennis Tan, the power of re-framing which I would like to share it here with you. There is a Chinese term "危机" which means "crisis". But we hope that through reframing, our saints can see "危机" (crisis) as "转机/良机/好时机" (good opportunities for growth).

Our Values

Thanksgiving • Resilience • Unity • Empathy • Wonder • Integrity • Self-Discipline • Excellence

I seek your partnership as parents to grow this resilience in our saints. We can do so by first, helping our children to always reframe a problem into an opportunity for growth. We can encourage our children to be holistic thinkers, to think of different ways to improve the situation when they encounter problems and be a community builder, to contribute positively to resolve any problems they may face. This will definitely require us as adults to reframe too, to exercise greater patience and self-control so that we do not rush in immediately to solve the problems for our children but give them the room to explore and learn to overcome from the setbacks they may face.

One of the stories which was shared with the saints during devotion was the amazing story of Nick Vujicic, a 'fighter' born with phocomelia – without some fully formed limbs. He is truly a great inspiration and can I suggest that if you can spare the time, do read more about Nick with your child as one of your family-bonding activities. One of the greatest lesson I have learnt from Nick is his attitude of thanksgiving and seeing his limitation as opportunities. Below are some suggested websites for your easy reference:

<http://www.nickvujicic.com/>

<https://www.lifewithoutlimbs.org/about-nick/bio/>

3. Strategic Thrust 4: Harnessing to Connect, Connecting to Harness

3.1 Thanksgiving

The strong and purposeful partnership built up over the years in SAJS has always been an envy of visiting educators. I am so thankful for the labour of love from a huge group of parents with some of the faithful ones continuing to serve even when their boys have graduated from SAJS.

To help us have a sense of the depth of our valued partnership, I would like to highlight the partnership taken place in January alone and highlight the parents involved in the first two events of the year. I would like to express my deepest thanksgiving to these parents for their support.

Key Activities in January

1. Support/Induction for P1 boys
2. Lunar New Year Celebrations
3. Programme for Active Learning for P1
4. Buddy Reading Programme
5. Chinese Oracy Programme

Parents provided Support for Lunar New Year Celebrations

1. Shirley
2. Alice Ho
3. Loh Kim Luan
4. Jaclyn
5. Yeow Wern Phei
6. Mae
7. Mr and Mrs Mark Lee
8. Catherine Chionh
9. Nico Chung

Parents provided Support for P1 boys

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Emily Tan | 14. Lim Swee Cheng |
| 2. Jessica Cheong | 15. Carina Lee |
| 3. Sally Ng | 16. Katherine Tan |
| 4. Te Yen Ni | 17. Margaretha |
| 5. Jacqueline Khoo | 18. Patrick Koh |
| 6. Shee Hock Ai Ling | 19. Kelvin Lim |
| 7. Amy Ou | 20. Daniel Teo |
| 8. Daniel Kalai | 21. Max Lim |
| 9. Mr and Mrs Sunil S/O Indrajit | 22. Kemti Indrajit |
| 10. Lim Ping Ping | 23. Edwin Lim* |
| 11. Jaclyn Jong | 24. Sharon Lim* |
| 12. G. Krishnanurthi | 25. Andrea Lim* |
| 13. Marina Oktavia | |
- * the boys of these parents have graduated from SAJS*

Please accept our apologies if we have missed your name. Our sincere gratitude to all of our valued partners for these school events and all other partnership platforms for the rest of the year.

3.2 Meet-the-Parents (MTP) Sessions

I would also like to thank you for making time to meet up with us at the MTP Sessions. While there are areas for improvement, we have garnered very positive feedback from parents across the levels. We appreciate those who have made the effort pen down your valuable feedback for us and your affirmations for the school. We are heartened that 97% of the parents strongly agree and agree that the session was useful and relevant.

I want to specially thank the following parents for taking the effort to affirm the school's efforts and encourage us in our work.

"It's a great idea to share this session with our kids" – Ms Jaslin Teo

"Very fruitful session and meeting with teachers. Supplementary class to help the students. Great teachers and support from school. Thank you!" – Mrs Vivienne Koh

"Love the character building focus of the school. I truly believe that it will help the boys become better men! And it has certainly helped my son blossom and grow into a little gentleman. I am totally impressed with the organisation/admin/thoughtfulness of this school and the wonderful dedicated teachers! I hold SAJS as the god standard and am very proud to talk about how good it is when in social situations. Kudos! Thank you."

– Ms Virginia Ng

"This is my fifth year attending PTM and it's fulfilling to know that the Principal and teachers make it a point to present their expectations of the boys and emphasising the values." – Ms Celeste Leong

"Good presentation by Principal. Session was well-informed and detailed. Good understanding of the future plans for the children." – Ms Jocelyn Tay

"Maintain and enhance the school core values which help to develop my son's character" – Mr Daniel Wong

"(what the school has done well) The emphasis of students' character, lifelong education and the teachings of feeling blessed with what the student has. We feel the sessions are excellent and the teachers as well as the Principal has well explained and communicated the messages. Excellent sessions!" – Mr & Mrs Steve Kek

"It is nice to receive very warm greeting from the Principal herself, making us feel welcome. Very good sharing from all the teachers." – Mr Vincent Cheong

I am very impressed that the school looks into many areas and aspect of learning experience of each child. From harnessing each child's potential to their safety and to their character building to preparing for their future." – Ms Eunice Chan

"The focus on building up the character of the boys and not purely academics. The focus was evident through the P's and teachers' presentations (which is appreciated to know the school is aligned)" – Ms Janis Lim

"The presentation is detail and well explained with rationale and key values outcome emphasis besides academic excellence. Indeed it is a learning process and takes time." – Anonymous

"Principal and respective teachers have addressed most parents concerns. It was a heart-warming welcome by Ms Neo." – Ms Loh Kim Luan

"Keeping the parents posted of what's happening in school and class through various means e.g. letter, email, class dojo and class websites. Keep it up! The bottle of water and CNY mandarin oranges were a pleasant surprise. Thank you " – Mr Lim Kong Jee

"Totally agree on the emphasis on character building for the boys!" – Ms Eileen Lee

"Explaining the holistic learning objectives for the school and demonstrating some of the ways the boys can live the school values every day. This was very clear and easy for parents to understand and to support at home." – Mr Nick Hunter

"Very comprehensive briefing for parents, including holistic aspects of the children's welfare. Mr Jimmy Lim has maintained good communication with myself. I feel that my son is in very good hands" – Mr Jordan Lee

*"It is always very good, including today, that Ms Neo prayed before she started her session and she shared about character building of the boys rather than focusing on academics. Mdm Lin, the Form Teacher also touched on these points. May I add that Mdm Lin has done an excellent job in being prompt in her updates and replies."
– Ms Iris Wee*

"I am grateful that the school looks beyond pure academics and there is emphasis on exploration and enjoyment. So far I am fine (responding to how school can better support parent), as the Form Teacher replies my emails promptly. I enjoyed my 3 days of volunteering in a P1 class. I really respect teachers now!" – Ms Jacqueline Khoo

3.3 Channels of Communication

We continue our practice to support the Green Movement, our school aims to start disseminating the Monthly Letter via email from March onwards. The e-platform also enables us to post colourful photos and insert links to useful websites.

If you did not receive the February Letter in your email, kindly log on to the school website (**Parents' Portal**) <http://www.saintandrewsjunior.moe.edu.sg/ParentsPortal.htm> to update your email address. This is to ensure successful implementation of our communication via email.

The main channel of communication with the teachers is via the personal organiser. If you need to contact any of our staff directly, you can find our email address on our website: <http://www.saintandrewsjunior.moe.edu.sg>.

3.4 Curriculum Time

I would like to emphasise the importance of curriculum time as boys do miss out a lot of learning and common experiences which bond them with their peers if they were to miss curriculum time. Hence the school strongly discourages our boys to take leave during curriculum time as it may affect their belief in the importance of being present in school. I appeal to parents to partner with us to inculcate this message to our boys. However, if there are unforeseen situations when our boys may need to miss curriculum time due to a family emergency or other private reasons, like sitting for a music examination, please email me at patsy_neo@schools.gov.sg for application of leave or early dismissal.

3.5 Monthly Sharing

This year, I would like to start a new segment for the P's monthly letter based on the feedback given by several parents for MTP. Several parents requested for the school to share useful strategies to educate our children so that they can reinforce the learning at home. Hence, I will try to share useful parenting or educational articles so that we can learn to grow together as significant adult role models in supporting our boys in their holistic development. This month's article is taken from Schoolbag.sg which is an online publication by the Ministry of Education, Singapore which aims to provide parents, educators and the general public with education news, school features and tips.

Hope you will enjoy this article.

Partnering teachers: Doing It the right way

Miss Leong Sou Cheng, an educator at an international school, suggests how parents can support their child's schools.

"Your presence in school should be seen as a support. People should sense your genuine care for your child, other schoolmates and staff," says Miss Leong Sou Cheng, an educator at an international school.

"Being involved in the school has given me a better insight into the school's culture and policies, which some parents may not be as familiar with. It has also given me the opportunity to interact with school leaders, teachers, other staff and parents. I've also gained a better appreciation of teachers, their roles, difficulties and dedication to duty. My involvement in the school has certainly helped me to develop a better working relationship with them."

- Mdm Kannagi Ibrahim, Then-Chairman of Evergreen Primary School's Parent Support Group

The squeaking wheel gets the oil; there is more than a ring of truth to this proverb. When it comes to parent-teacher partnership, your goal however, is not just to make your presence felt, but leave the right presence.

Parent-teacher collaboration is not about "kiasu" parents barging into the school office and making demands. Armed with the information they need, they march in with a very specific aim, usually result-oriented, and will not back down until the school gives in to their requests.

Needless to say, after one storm of an incident, the parent may leave quite an impression; the entire school may possibly know this parent and the child by name. Any mention of the name will cause a teacher pay double the attention and check doubly hard on matters concerning the child. A teacher attends to between 200 - 300 students each week, and in an average class of 30 – 40 students, it may seem like not bad idea to leave such an impression. At least the child is getting the attention. You only had to do it once and you would leave an inefaceable impression. The trouble is, however, that the reputation sticks.

Will your child really benefit from your actions? **I think that children will benefit tremendously from the way their parents model positive interactions with others in the school, and from the positive connections they make along the way to support their children's educational experience.**

Your presence in school should be seen as a support. People should sense your genuine care for your child, other schoolmates and staff, such as when you help out at school events and socialise comfortably with others. For example, I heard that parents of Westview Primary School supported a sandwich-making event held at school; children learned how to make sandwiches, and also witnessed how their parents reached out to support other children. Parents of Tampines Primary School provide a reading support programme to help small groups of readers develop literacy skills.

Aside from putting in time and effort, relationship building is probably one of the most vital and difficult skills to master. So I was heartened to hear about parents sharing their experiences and good practices with one another at a Parent Support Group (PSG) Conference. Parents can also participate in initiatives organised by PSGs and access resources shared on the MOE Facebook page and Schoolbag.sg, to understand more about effective partnership.

We are all different, and the dynamics of all partnerships will be different too. But with the same goal, and the right attitude, parents and teachers can close the gap and become strong partners in education. After all, it takes a village to raise a child.

15 May 2015

<https://www.schoolbag.sg/story/partnering-teachers-doing-it-the-right-way>

4. Important Updates: Safety and Security

4.1 Traffic

First, I would like to acknowledge that the traffic in the morning in SAJS is very heavy, like most primary schools, as many parents drive their children to school. However, SAJS is in a more unique situation because we share the same entrance and exit as SASS. Hence I would like to appeal to all parents to abide strictly to the traffic rules so that we can all contribute to making the roads safe for our children. Let us role-model as a **community builder** in this respect and I would like to assure parents that the school is constantly reviewing our traffic practices to make it more efficient for all.

In the meantime, I would like to highlight some dangerous situations we have observed and would like you to avoid:

- i. Along the main road:
Boys alighting on the right lane of the road. They risked getting knocked by incoming vehicle as they cut through the left lane to enter the school compound.
- ii. In the school car park
Boys alighting before the "Drop Off" Zone. They risked getting knocked by moving vehicle as they walk/run in between vehicles to enter the school building.

4.2 Dropping Off and Parking

- i. We would like to once again encourage you to **make use of the carpark opposite the school** to ease the traffic congestion in the morning and during dismissal.
- ii. Parents driving through for the drop off in the morning **either at SAJS car park or Ascension Kindergarten (AK) car park:**
 - Please display the "Drive Through Only" car label clearly. **NO PARKING is allowed.**
 - Please **drop off your child at the specified "Drop Off" lane** to avoid obstructing the traffic in front of the school porch and the school canteen.
 - Please be **mindful of the NO STOPPING zones.**
 - Please prepare **your child to get his bag ready and alight from the vehicle swiftly.**
 - Please be patient and **ensure safety at all times.**
- iii. Please be informed that parents are allowed to walk with our boys from the AK car park to the school canteen if it rains in the morning.

4.3 Appeal

I would like to appeal to all parents to continue to role-model and educate our children to be responsible and safe road users at **ALL TIMES**. Please remind our children and ourselves to abide by the traffic rules as stipulated by the school to ensure safety of all traffic users and not cause any danger simply because of convenience or avoiding be late for school. Remember, being late is better than never!

Thank you for your time and I look forward to forge greater partnership with you! Up and On!

Yours sincerely,

Ms Patsy Neo
Principal